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## Helms of CIA: Secret Intriguer and Public Figure

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WASHINGTON, May 19 — In a recent edition of "Who's Who in America," the official biography for Richard McGarrah Helms is less than an inch long. It identifies him simply as "govt. off.," lists prosaic things like his educational credentials. (B. A. Williams Coll. 1933), his clubs (Chevy Chase, City Tavern Assn.) and his office address: Central Intelligence Agy., Washington, 20505.

What the brief sketch doesn't mention, however, is that in the colorful career of the tall, handsome Mr. Helms, the nation's chief intelligence officer, there is enough intrigue and derring-do to fill a dozen spy novels.

Take, for instance, the time in 1953 just after Nikita Khrushchev had delivered his secret "de-Stalinization" speech to the Communist Party Congress in Moscow.

As deputy chief of the CIA's *Clandestine Services*, Mr. Helms directed the agents who dummed up a copy of the speech with 32 derogatory inserts about neutral nations and their leaders. They then circulated it abroad — and caused the Russians some severe embarrassment.

OR TAKE the time Mr. Helms supervised an operation that involved digging a tunnel under 500 yards of East and West German soil to allow CIA agents to tap Moscow's phone conversation with the East German government, its own secret police agents in Germany and its own army command.

In all probability, most of Mr. Helms' career will remain classified "top secret" until long after his death, which is exactly as he would have it. As he told a recent meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, "... it is axiomatic that an intelligence service — whatever type of government it serves — must wrap itself in as much secrecy as possible in order to operate effectively..."

The speech, Mr. Helms's first public address since he was named director of the CIA in 1966, was encouraged by the Nixon Administration, which had become disturbed by critics charging that an intelligence network is incompatible with a democratic society.

After countering several criticisms with cool grace, Mr. Helms said: "The nation must, to a degree, take it on faith that we, too, are honorable men devoted to her service..."

In all official circles, Mr. Helms is already regarded not only as honorable but also as dedicated, talented and — the supreme accolade in a capital that has its share of high-level dilettantes — immensely professional.

WHERE ONCE it was thought that Richard Nixon would replace Mr. Helms with a Republican appointee, the current consensus is that when and if the President reorganizes the sprawling intelligence community he will solidify, rather than diminish, Mr. Helms' authority.

Mr. Helms already has three separate roles: CIA director; over-all director of central intelligence (which means that



RICHARD HELMS  
U. S. Intelligence Head

he is chief intelligence adviser to the White House and Congress); and chairman of the U. S. intelligence board (which comprises all the other governmental intelligence outfits).

But he has no real authority over any group but the CIA. Under a reorganization, it is possible that Mr. Helms either would be given direct control of all intelligence operations or relocated in a special White House capacity.

Mr. Helms' quick mind, his remarkable grasp of complex issues, his insistence on staying out of the policy-making field and, above all, his forthrightness have earned him the respect of many of the administration's severest Congressional critics.

"Helms is great with Congress," says one Senate

staffer. "He admits when he doesn't know something. He never lies."

HE IS also one of the most sought-after dinner guests in Washington — charming, witty, debonair, completely removed from the popular image of the nation's super-spook.

The 53-year-old Helms learned his social graces in Europe, where he spent two years in fashionable schools. After graduating from Williams, he went back to Europe as a wire-service reporter. Utilizing his fluency in German (he also speaks almost flawless French), he wangled an exclusive interview with one of the continent's rising radical politicians, Adolf Hitler.

Financial and personal problems forced him to abandon reporting and join the business side of a newspaper in Indiana. Then, during World War II, he worked for the Office of Strategic Services, and as soon as the CIA was created in 1947, he signed on.

Through the years, he served in most of the agency's branches, so that when the time came for President Johnson to pick a new director in 1966, Mr. Helms was the logical choice, even though no career man had ever headed the agency before.

Mr. Helms lives in Washington with his second wife, Cynthia, whom he married in 1969. Between them they have five grown children.

He keeps in shape by playing a creditable game of tennis and, if rumors are to be believed, one of his favorite pastimes is a kind of busman's holiday: reading spy novels.

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## A Creed for Intelligence

In what may be the first public address in a decade by a director of the super-secret Central Intelligence Agency, Richard Helms stressed that the CIA played no domestic security role. Its mission is intelligence about foreign powers, and the CIA does "not target on American citizens."

Speaking to allay the apprehensions of those who discern contradictions in an agency of a free society pursuing foreign intelligence operations, Mr. Helms said:

"We are, after all, a part of this democracy, and we believe in it. We would not want to see our work distort its values and its principles. We propose

to adapt intelligence to American society, not vice versa."

That's a worthy creed which should be resolutely observed, not only by the CIA, whose mission focuses on external security, but by other agencies, whose mission may focus in part on internal security. Especially should domestic surveillance occur only under the most clearly defined, narrowly limited conditions if the democratic values and principles to which Mr. Helms alludes are not to be distorted. And in view of recent disclosures and allegations, those definitions and limits to domestic surveillance should not be taken on faith. ✓